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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. LAHOOD].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

October 19, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We pray, O God, that peace will reign in our world and we specially pray that peace will reign in our hearts. We are grateful that even in lives that know the tension between the ideals of the mind and the reality of an imperfect world there can be a sense of calm, and even with great responsibilities that seem to overwhelm there can be serenity. Grant to all Your people, O God, the gift of peace and calm and serenity, this day and every day, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. GUTIERREZ].

Mr. GUTIERREZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There will be fifteen 1-minutes on each side.

IT IS TIME TO UPDATE MEDICARE

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today is a historic day. Today, the House will move to preserve and protect Medicare.

Thirty years ago, on a closed rule, Congress passed a 1960's Blue Cross-Blue Shield health care plan called Medicare. Health care has progressed 30 years. It has improved. Now it is time to bring Medicare up to date.

If we do not, it is going to go broke. The only way to sustain the cumbersome system is to raise payroll taxes \$123 billion.

The Republican plan will preserve and protect Medicare and offer some options. If seniors do nothing, they will stay on Medicare. They can also select Medicare Plus to expand their coverage through a health managed care plan. They can select a medical savings plan to reward them for having a healthy lifestyle, or they can select the health care plan they had while working under an employer if he chooses to offer it.

Those who oppose updating Medicare are the same folks who said schoolchildren would be starving this year. It was reported last night they said if we passed this plan, one-fourth of the hospitals in America will close.

Well the schoolchildren are not starving, and the hospitals will not close.

I urge my colleagues to preserve and protect Medicare. Live long and prosper.

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE, WITH CHARITY FOR ALL

(Mr. GUTIERREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today is a historic day. A day that House Republicans, to fulfill their unsatiable desire to give a tax cut to their wealthiest contributors, will try to slash Medicare by \$300 billion.

We Democrats remember historic days. We remember when 30 years ago Lyndon Johnson and Harry Truman stood together and said, "the time has come to guarantee health care for all of our seniors."

We feel as much pride in that day as Republicans should feel shame on this day. So maybe it is time for them to remember their history too. In 1865, facing a challenge far greater than rising Medicare costs, our greatest President—a Republican President—stated that we would heal our Nation's wounds "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

I say to my colleagues in the majority—slashing \$300 billion from seniors' health care for a tax giveaway to your rich friends is malice, pure and simple. With malice toward none, with charity for all. How empty and distant those words seem to the party of Abraham Lincoln today.

REFORMING MEDICARE FOR THE BETTER

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my good friend from Illinois who preceded me here in the well. He quoted Abraham Lincoln accurately. But he misapplied the quote, for rather being malicious and mean-spirited, the only mantra the guardians of the old order can offer, instead what we are doing today is embodying the spirit of America.

Because we are saying to America's seniors, you deserve to have a choice in health care. You do not need to be cut off magically at age 65 to a one-size-fits-all plan. We believe you have the right to determine the health care you should have, and if you want to keep Medicare as it exists now, then you have the right to keep that as well.

But the senseless mantra that we are making changes in Medicare for tax breaks for the wealthy is patently false and, Mr. Speaker, even malicious.

How sad it is; it is symptomatic of the new minority, folks who have no vision for the future, would only apply a Band-Aid and only came up with a plan in the final nanosecond of the 11th hour, instead of dealing responsibly.

Friends, join us. Let us reform Medicare for the better.

MEDICARE AND MANAGED CARE

(Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, today is the day, today is the day that the Republican majority will pass historic cuts to the Medicare Program. Today is the day that they will cut \$270 billion out of the Medicare Program. Today is the day that they will begin to raise premiums and deductibles for people, like Herb McCulloch, who lives on \$240 a month and they are going to ask him to come up with an additional \$100 a month in out-of-pocket expenses.

Why are they doing this? Because they want to pass a \$245 billion tax cut. Better than 52 percent of that tax cut is going to go to individuals and families earning \$100,000 or more.

Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen of the House, their solution is to put elderly into managed care programs, managed care. You know what it means. It means managed to deny care to the very senior citizens they propose to protect.

It is not fair. It is not right. As Democrats, we are going to say "no."

Today Republicans should be ashamed of themselves.

TODAY WE VOTE TO SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today is the day we vote to save, protect, and preserve Medicare. Today is the day we

show the seniors that we care about them and their future.

The Medicare Preservation Act is an honest, realistic, up-front bill, that provides real reform for our current Medicare system. It will ensure that seniors have the right to stay in their present Medicare plan, but will also offer choices to those looking for a change.

The Medicare Preservation Act attacks waste, fraud, and abuse in order to provide real accountability for the taxpayers dollars.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, today is the day we vote to save Medicare for the next generation. I urge all my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Medicare Preservation Act.

TROOPS TO BOSNIA WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL CONSENT?

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, once again, a President says he can send troops into a war zone without the consent of the Congress.

What is the surprise here? Think about it. The Congress of the United States has time after time allowed the Presidents of the United States to usurp the constitutional power of the people. Turn the other cheek, and now the President is just simply going ahead and servicing all the cheeks he can in Congress.

The bottom line is this: I do not know how you feel about Bosnia, Members, but I say not one American soldier shall be sent to Bosnia without a vote of the Congress. That is not the old-fashioned way. That is the constitutional way.

If we continue to let Presidents take the Constitution and mold it like clay in their hands, we are going to find ourselves in one hell of a bloody war.

WE ARE IMPROVING MEDICARE

(Mr. GILCHREST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, all those who are listening in the House Chamber this morning, and if there are any people over the age of 65 listening on their televisions at home, the vote that we will take today will not take any benefits to Medicare away.

The existing program of Medicare, if it is not reformed, is not sustainable. We are going to take a vote that will reform Medicare in a manner that, if any senior citizen wants to keep the existing program the way it is, they can choose to do so. If any senior citizen wants to choose another form of health care or another health care carrier, the amount of money that they put in and the Federal Government puts into their Medicare Program as an individual can be transferred to that contracting health care carrier.

The point is we are going to make Medicare better for senior citizens.

A FALSE CHOICE

(Mr. DEUTSCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, we are here today because my Republican colleagues want to destroy Medicare, and their premise is that Medicare will be bankrupt in 7 years.

What I have here is a chart that points out a fact, which is that in the 30 years of Medicare's existence, the actuarial life of Medicare was less than 7 years. This is not unprecedented. It is a flatout lie that my Republican colleagues have been stating about the unprecedented nature of the 7-year actuarial life.

The \$270 billion in cuts, as my Republican colleagues have been talking about, is also a flatout lie. The trustee report calls for a far less number in terms of what would make actuarial sense for the Medicare system.

The choice that my Republican colleagues have been talking about is a false choice. Everyone in this Chamber, everyone in America knows what the agenda is. The agenda is to force people into substandard HMO's because the reimbursement level in a traditional Medicare will be so low.

Just because people are old in this country does not mean they are stupid. The American people will not believe what the Republicans are doing.

HEALTH CARE CHOICES FOR OUR SENIOR CITIZENS

(Mr. LONGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am tired of the nonsense we have been listening to.

There are three very simple truths about what the House is going to act on today, and, first, as the minority party appears to forget, this is a program, Medicare is a program that is paid for by taxes on the wages of working people and by seniors through their premiums.

We owe it to them to see that this money is used wisely and effectively, No. 1.

No. 2, any senior who is currently in the Medicare Program is going to be guaranteed the right to stay in the Medicare Program as it is if that is what they choose to do. There will be no increase in copayment, no increase in deductible, and the premium rate will be maintained at the 70 percent paid for by the Government rate, 30 percent paid for by seniors.

Third, we are going to allow those seniors who wish to make choices about their health care. What a radical idea, that we would allow people to choose the health care program that might be best for them.